

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 ARA-10 HA-05 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01
/107 W

-----058248 210458Z /23

R 191413Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8457
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 2274

DEPT PASS HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINR, PINS, SOPN, ET, CH, SO, GE
SUBJECT: NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY CORRESPONDENT'S VIEWS ON ETHIOPIA

SUMMARY: AT HIS OWN INITIATIVE, RESIDENT HSIN HUA NEWS
AGENCY CORRESPONDENT CHANG CHING-LEI PAID COURTESY CALL
ON ACTING POLCOUNS. DURING CONVERSATION, CHANG DES-
CRIBED OFFICIAL PRC RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA AS "COLL,"
SIAD'S VISIT TO PEKING AS DICTATED BY NON-AFRICAN POLICY
CONCERNS, SITUATION IN ERITREA AS NOT REPEAT NOT MAJOR
OFFENSIVE AND GROWING WARSAW PACT INFLUENCE IN ETHIOPIA.
WHILE CHANGE DID NOT EXPLICITLYLY MENTION IT, SOME ETHIOPIAN
TECHNOLCRATS FEAR THAT PREPONDERANT SOVIET ROLE IN ETHIO-
PIA MAY TURN PRC AWAY FROM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS
ALREADY PLANNED, WHICH MIGHT BE SEEN IN PEKING AS SUPPORT-
ING SOVIET EFFORTS HERE. END SUMMARY.

1. SINO-ETHIO RELATIONS: CHANG SAID ETHIOPIAN GOVT (PMGSE)
HAD TAKEN A "COOL" POSTURE TOWARD PEKING OFFICIALLY, BUT
THAT INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS WITH INDIVIDUAL ETHIOPIANS WERE STILL
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GOOD. CHINESE TECHNICIANS HAVE BEEN DENIED ACCESS TO MILITARILY
SENSITIVE AREAS, SUCH AS ASSAB PORT, WHERE THEY FORMERLY COULD
ENTER 2-3 MONTHS AGO. CHANG ALSO SAID COOPERATION FROM
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION (MININFO) WAS NOT VERY GOOD BECAUSE,
HE BELIEVED, OF INCREASING EAST GERMAN AND SOVIET INFLUENCE
OVER MEDIA.

2. SINO-SOMALI RELATIONS: CHANG SAID THAT DURING SIAD'S VISIT TO PEKING, HE HAD BEEN ADVISED BY CHINESE OFFICIALS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA AND ATTEMPT TO CO-EXIST PEACEFULLY. CHANG SAID PRC DID NOT WISH TO TAKE SIDES IN HORN BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA, NOR IN ANY OTHER AFRICAN INTER-STATE CONFLICT. HOWEVER, HE ALLOWED THAT SOMETIMES THERE WERE OTHER FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS WHICH PEKING FACTORED INTO ITS DECISIONS. SUCH WAS CASE FOR SIAD OFFICIAL VISIT.

3. ERITREAN SITUATION: CHANG STATED THAT GENERALLY RELIABLE SOURCE HAD TOLD HIM THAT ETHIOPIA DID NOT PLAN ON MAJOR OFFENSIVE IN ERITREA PRIOR TO JULY OAU SUMMIT IN KHARTOUM. HE WAS INFORMED THAT ETHIOPIA WOULD ATTEMPT TO LOOSEN SEIGE OF MAJOR TOWNS AND TO OPEN MAJOR ROADS IN PIECEMEAL BATTLES PRIOR TO SUMMIT AND EVEN POSSIBLY TO CLOSE SUPPLY ROUTES FROM SUDAN. HOWEVER, HE DID FORESEE MAJOR OFFENSIVE BEING LAUNCHED AFTER RAINY SEASON IN ERITREA, PERHAPS AS EARLY AS SEPT OR OCT.

4. RESIDENT PRESS SITUATION: CHANG SAID RESIDENT FOREIGN PRESS CORPS CONSISTED OF ONE YUGOSLAV (TANJUG), LOCAL AGENCE FRANCE PRESS (AFP) STRINGER, 8 SOVIETS (NOT FURTHER IDENTIFIED, BUT KNOWN TO INCLUDE TASS, PRAVDA AND POSSIBLY IVESTIYA), ONE CUBAN (PRENSA LATINA), UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF EAST GERMANS INCLUDING ADN AND HIMSELF (HSIN HUA). HE STATED THERE WERE NUMBER OF EAST GERMAN ADVISERS IN MININFO WHO CONDUCTED DAILY 2-HOUR TRAINING SESSIONS WITHIN MINISTRY.
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5. BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: CHANG CHING-LEI ARRIVED IN ETHIOPIA ON OR ABOUT MAY 11, 1978, HAVING COMPLETED HIS PREVIOUS ASSI-MENT IN ADEN (PDRY),. HE IS ATTACHED TO HSIN HUA'S INTERNATIONAL BRANCH, HAS PRIVATE OFFICE IN ADDIS ABABA NEAR PRC EMBASSY AND SAID ETHIOPIA IS HIS FIRST ASSIGNMENT IN AFRICA. HE STATED THAT HIS PREDECESSOR HAD RETURNED TO PEKING. CHANG APPEARED TO BE BETWEEN 35 AND 40 YRS OLD. HE SPEAKS FLUENT AMERICAN ENGLISH WHICH HE SAID HE LEARNED IN PEKING. CHANG IS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE CHI HUI-MIN. IT IS NOT YET KNOWN BY EMBASSY IF THEY HAVE ANY CHILDREN. DURING CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, CHANG USED WESTERN JOURNALISTIC TECHNIQUES TO SOLICIT INFORMATION AND APPEARED QUITE RELAXED AND FRIENDLY. HE IS ABOUT 5 FEET 6 OR 7 INCHES TALL AND SLIGHTLY BUILT. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY PRC EMBOFF DURING VISIT, PROBABLY MORE FOR PROTOCOL REASONS THAN ANYTHING ELSE. EMBOFF ALSO SPEAKS FLUENT ENGLISH.
WALKER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, INFORMATION MEDIA
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ADDIS02274
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780213-0884
Format: TEL
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780542/aaaabjbl.tel
Line Count: 111
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1c568c9a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2644251
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY CORRESPONDENT'S VIEWS ON ETHIOPIA SUMMARY: AT HIS OWN INITIATIVE, RESIDENT HSIN HUA NEWS AGENCY CORRESPONDENT CHANG CHING-LEI PAID COURTESY
TAGS: PEPR, PINR, PINS, SOPN, ET, CH, SO, GC, UR, (CHANG CHING-LEI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1c568c9a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014